

PROOF of Story 'nancy allen' (#23188) Requested by CARIAGA (\$E313) on 11/02/82 11:56:26

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STORY #*****

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she performs 11/9

LIN# OUTPUT TEXT

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3 By JOE SALTZMAN



unpublished

6 Anyone who wants to stay on the good side of harpist

7 Nancy Allen had better not say anything about heaven or angels or wings.

8 That's guaranteed to turn this mild-mannered, 105-

9 pound musician into a woman of steel.

10 "People always are coming up to me and saying

11 something about heaven and harps and angels," she said

12 with a weariness that results from hearing more than

13 two decades of angel talk. "And they always say it as if

14 they were the first ones to think of it. It gets very tiring,

15 very quickly."

16 It's also good advice not to mess with her sisters,

17 either, because Barbara Allen and Jane Allen also are harpists and

18 also have heard the same jokes all their lives. So has

19 their mother, Mary.

20 "We all got tired of jokes about the 'three little angels'

21 when we were very young," Allen said. "My mother

22 would finally say, 'I'm sure when they go to heaven,

23 they'll be harp movers, not harp players.' That usually

24 changed the subject."

25 Nancy Allen, who will play the harp with flutist

26 Ransom Wilson in a duo concert at 8 p.m. Tuesday (11/9) at El Camino College, is 28. She and

27 her sisters have been playing the harp since they were old enough to reach it (about 6).
28 Barbara, 26, played harp for the San Francisco Symphony and now freelances in New York.

Jane,

29 30, is in Oregon where she plays in the Eugene Symphony.

30 The three girls, growing up in Putnam County north of New
31 York City, played in churches and small recitals. "I guess it
32 was unique: the three of us playing our own harps," she
33 remembered. "I began on a larger instrument when I couldn't
34 even reach the pedals. I had to sit on telephone books."

35 Their father, Don, was a medical photographer who
36 played the drums as a hobby and took great pride in his
37 three harpists.

38 "I remember my father carrying all three
39 harps up long staircases and into the church complain-
40 ing but loving every minute of it," she said. "I remember
41 when he first realized he wasn't carrying my harp
42 anymore. It meant I was growing up. It was a shocking
43 realization."

44 A harp has 47 strings and the joke among harpists is
45 "you spend half your life tuning the instrument and the
46 other half playing it out of tune." Don Allen used to help his three daughters tune their
47 harps. He would stand at the piano and play a C and then his three little girls would take
48 their harps and all tune their C-strings.

49 Allen made her professional debut at 14. In 1972, she entered the Juilliard School on a
50 scholarship, eventually studying with two famous harpists of
51 the 20th Century

52 --Marcel Grandjany and Lily Laskine. In 1975, she made her Carnegie Recital Hall (cq) debut
in

53 New York, became the second harpist for the New York Philharmonic, and now performs
throughout
54 the world.

55 For her first solo recording, "A Celebration for Harp:
56 Three Centuries of Music by Scarlatti, Bach, Loeillet,
57 Respighi, Prokofiev and others," an Angel digital record, she
58 and producer Patti Laursen worried about the music sounding
59 "dangerously the same" since the harp repertory is so
60 limited. So Allen read through more than 150 Scarlatti
61 sonatas to find those best adapted to the harp.

62 For her new Angel release in January, she recorded music of

63 Debussy and Ravel and brought together such supporting artists
64 as Gerard Schwarz and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the
65 Tokyo String Quartet, clarinetist David Shifrin and flutist
66 Wilson. Included will be her transcription of Debussy's
67 "Suite Bergamasque," which includes the famous "Clair de
68 lune." That also will be one of her solos in Tuesday's
69 concert with Wilson. Wilson and Allen have made two albums
70 together for Angel.

71 A harp weighs about 85 pounds but in its massive case
72 it weighs 230 pounds. When you weigh less than half
73 that, it's not an easy matter to move the harp around the
74 world for concerts.

75 "It's a burden. I'm used to it, but it is a pain to carry
76 around. Since I'm rather petite, when people see me
77 alone they always try to help me. Sometimes it's harder
78 that way. They try to pick the harp up when I'm
79 carrying it on a dolly; not realizing they're taking it off
80 the dolly and making it much more difficult for me.

81 "After a while, they inevitably suggest that I should
82 start playing the piccolo instead."

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